Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education  
EDUC 626 Spiritual Development in Jewish Education  
Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Shire  
Spring 2013

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Course Scheduling:  
This course is being offered in two formats: online and on-campus this semester.

On-campus format: Classes will be held on Thursdays 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 pm.

Online format: Each week of online coursework will begin on Thursday midnight EST. I have found that this is the best time of the week to roll over to a new learning unit. Some units however will last two weeks with work to be done within that period.

Office Hours:  
I will be available on Monday afternoons EST for consultation, advice, discussion, etc., in person or via telecommunication. Please make an appointment by emailing me so that I can make time available for you.

Differentiated Learning:  
Please indicate to the instructor if you have learning needs that can be differentiated for you

Essential Course Aims:  
Jewish education has been primarily concerned with the transmission of knowledge, acquisition of skills and developing Jewish identity in young people. However, many people wonder if any of this ‘sticks’ as a child grows up in a multi-cultural, multi-faith world. One aspect of cultivating religious identity has been missing from Jewish educational practice and that is nurturing the spiritual growth of the child. We seem to shy away from this practice in our schools and synagogues, often thinking that spiritual practice and a child’s being with God are not part of the Judaism we know. However, not only is nurturing spiritual practice part of the essence of Judaism, it has also been a long component of Jewish childhood but largely ignored in our times. This course seeks to explore the spiritual life of the child drawing upon the latest research and our own experience, offering a Jewish lens with which to view this spirituality that comes from our traditional sources and seeking to develop new practices for Jewish education in our classrooms, camps, synagogues, community centers that nurture the Jewish spiritual life of our children.

Learning Outcomes:  
1. To locate Jewish education within the discipline of general religious education  
2. To explore implications from Christian religious education for Jewish religious education  
3. To critically understand and apply developmental theories of growth to religious education  
4. To research the spirituality of children in the context of Jewish education  
5. To generate teaching strategies for the nurture of the spiritual in Jewish education  
6. To explore the sources of Jewish tradition for a nuanced understanding of children and childhood  
7. To develop strategies for the teaching of tefillah and Torah to enhance spiritual expression  
8. To develop modes of curriculum for the enhancement of spiritual practice  
9. To develop a personal theology of childhood
Required Reading:
- The majority of readings for the course will be available on-line or will be posted on Schoology. There will be required readings or chevruta study each week posted on schoology.
- Students will be required to purchase:

Assessments:
Assessment for this course is designed to assist the instructor gauge the depth of learning, level of contribution and ability for creative and imaginative play in theological education. Assessment is also designed to enable students to gauge their own ability to learn and therefore some assignments will be self and peer graded.

Assignments will include (assessed by student/peers):
- Faith development interview with a child and teen/adult
- Reflection on practice in teaching tefillah
- Reflection on practice in teaching Torah
- Havruta study
- Final curriculum project

Assessment will also be made on the following criteria (assessed by instructor):
- Contribution to discussion
- Creative and imaginative ability to play
- General depth of understanding and reading in the field

The self/peer assessment and the instructor assessment will be equally weighted with 50% of the overall grade allocated to each.

Overall Course Structure:
UNIT 1: Jewish Education as an applied practice of Religious Education
Week 1: Defining the Landscape – 1/31
Introduction

Week 2: Mapping Religious Education – 2/7
Guest Presenter: Professor Bob Pazmino, Professor of Religious Education, Andover Newton Theological School

Week 3: Mapping Religious Education – 2/14
Guest Presenter: Professor Bob Pazmino.

No Class: – 2/21

UNIT 2: Spiritual Development: Theory to applied Practice
Week 4: Faith Development Theory – 2/28

Week 5: Application of Development Theories – 3/7

Week 6: Teaching Tefillah – 3/14

No Class: – 3/21 and 3/28

UNIT 3: Child as Spiritual Learner
Week 7: Research into the Spiritual Life of Children – 4/4

Week 8: Practice for the Spiritual Life of Children – 4/11

Week 9: Teaching Bible – 4/18

UNIT 4: Theology of Childhood
Week 10: Biblical and Rabbinic Sources for a Jewish Theology of Childhood – 4/25
No Class – 5/2

Week 11: Janucz Korczak and the Nature of Childhood – 5/9

Final project is due May 23 accompanied by reflective learning addendum and self and peer grading.